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Award Number: DAMD17-00-1-0062

TITLE: Phase IIA Chemopreventative Study of Selenium in Persons at Risk for Lung Cancer

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REPORT DATE: March 2001

TYPE OF REPORT: Annual

PREPARED FOR: U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED
	March 2001	Annual (15 Feb 00 - 14 Feb 01)

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE
Phase IIA Chemopreventative Study of Selenium in Persons at Risk for Lung Cancer

5. FUNDING NUMBERS
DAMD17-00-1-0062

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8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER

9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)
U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command
Fort Detrick, Maryland 21702-5012

10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT *(Maximum 200 Words)*

Selenized yeast has also recently been shown to reduce lung cancer incidence and mortality in a population of skin cancer patients. Smokers and survivors of early stage lung and head and neck cancers have had a long period of promotion by carcinogenic agents on the bronchial epithelium resulting in morphologic and molecular alterations. We hypothesize that these morphologic and molecular alterations can be detected and modulated by chemopreventive agents. We have proposed a Phase IIa chemoprevention trial evaluating five different dose levels of selenium administered daily for 3 months in subjects at high risk for lung cancer with bronchoscopically documented dysplasia. Subjects will be entered to determine the effect of dose on the modulation of biomarkers in response to selenium supplementation as well as to measure selenium levels and modulation of glutathione peroxidase as a measure of drug effect. In addition to morphology, the surrogate endpoint biomarkers to be examined include apoptosis, p53 expression, K-ras mutation analysis, p16 methylation, and upregulation of hnRNP A2/B1. Successful completion of this study will support selenium supplementation as potentially beneficial therapy in preventing the progression of lung carcinogenesis as well as identify surrogate endpoint markers that appear to be modulated by selenium supplementation.

14. SUBJECT TERMS	15. NUMBER OF PAGES
Phase IIA Chemopreventative Study of Selenium in Persona at Risk for Lung Cancer	17
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT
Unclassified	Unclassified	Unclassified	Unlimited

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PHASE IIA CHEMOPREVENTION STUDY OF SELENIUM IN PERSONS AT RISK FOR LUNG CANCER

INTRODUCTION

Much knowledge has been acquired about the multi-step process of carcinogenesis in the lung during the last 20 years. Tumorigenesis appears to be the result of a number of genetic insults, although it remains to be determined whether there is a necessary sequence or a critical number of events required. Certain genetic alterations can be detected in the bronchial epithelium of persons at increased risk for lung cancer. Selenium may act through several different mechanisms of action, including stimulation of apoptosis, protection of tissue against oxidative damage, inhibition of tumor growth, reduction of mutagenic activity and reduction of activation of carcinogens and stimulation of the immune system. Selenized yeast has also recently been shown to reduce lung cancer incidence and mortality in a population of skin cancer patients. Smokers and survivors of early stage lung and head and neck cancers have had a long period of promotion by carcinogenic agents on the bronchial epithelium resulting in morphologic and molecular alterations. **We hypothesize that these morphologic and molecular alterations can be detected and modulated by chemopreventive agents.** We have proposed a Phase IIa chemoprevention trial evaluating five different dose levels of selenium administered daily for 3 months in subjects at high risk for lung cancer with bronchoscopically documented dysplasia. After establishing the maximum tolerated dose, additional subjects will be entered at that dose level in order to examine the modulation of biomarkers in response to selenium supplementation as well as to measure selenium levels and modulation of glutathione peroxidase as a measure of drug effect. In addition to morphology, the surrogate endpoint biomarkers to be examined include apoptosis, p53 expression, K-ras mutation analysis, p16 methylation, and upregulation of hnRNP A2/B1. Successful completion of this study will support selenium supplementation as potentially beneficial therapy in preventing the progression of lung carcinogenesis as well as identify surrogate endpoint markers that appear to be modulated by selenium supplementation.

BODY

The Statement of Work was submitted as a timeline. Initial patient accrual refers to the enrollment of subjects on the dose-finding portion of the study, and this is still currently underway. No secondary patient accrual has begun, as completion of the first phase is required before continuing on to the second phase.

Since October 1, 1999, 5 subjects have consented to participation and undergone sputum induction. One was eligible to proceed to bronchoscopy but did not have metaplastic or dysplastic biopsy samples. Fourteen subjects have completed the dose finding phase of the study. Screening for the last subject needed for the dose selection phase is in progress at the Lifetime Cancer Screening Center. We have opted for a limited screening of study subjects for recruitment of the last individual needed for the completion of the dose finding phase of the study.

A total of 499 subjects have been screened for the study, with 153 eligible for the study. Of those eligible, 151 chose to participate in the study. Sputum induction has been performed on

151 individuals. Forty-one were normal and 102 showed some abnormality, with 8 specimens showing inadequate levels of cells or no specimen could be produced. Fifty-three of those 102 subjects elected to continue on to the bronchoscopy. Analysis of bronchial biopsies resulted in 14 subjects being eligible to take part in the selenium dose selection phase of the study and all agreed to participate. All fourteen subjects have completed three months of selenium at the various dose levels. Recruitment and work-up continue to place the 15th subject on study in order to complete the dose finding phase of the study.

Demographics

Of the 151 subjects who had a sputum induction, 96 were male and 55 female. The group consisted of 90 current smokers and 61 former smokers. Of the 53 subjects who proceeded with bronchoscopy, 41 were male and 12 were female. This group consisted of 23 current and 30 former smokers. Mean pack-years of smoking were 61.2 for males, 58.1 for females, 51.8 for former smokers and 72.4 for current smokers.

Sputum results

Sputum inductions on 151 subjects produced the following results:

Sputum Cytology Results	Number
No Significant Abnormality	41
Metaplasia	82
Mild Dysplasia	17
Moderate Dysplasia	2
Severe Dysplasia	1
Insufficient material/Not interpretable	8

The 102 subjects with metaplasia or dysplasia were eligible to proceed to bronchoscopy.

Bronchoscopy Results

Bronchoscopy was performed on 53 individuals. Those with dysplasia qualified to enter the selenium dose selection. Fourteen individuals were randomly assigned to one of five dose levels of selenium for 3 months and had a second bronchoscopy upon completion. The bronchoscopy results were as follows:

Bronchial Histopathology	Initial	3 Month
No Significant Abnormality	14	0
Basal Cell Hyperplasia	0	1
Regular Metaplasia	23	1
Mild Dyplasia	11	8
Moderate Dysplasia	4	3
Severe Dysplasia	1	1
CIS	0	0
Invasive Cancer	0	0
Total	53	14

Data is presented by smoking and bronchoscopy finding in figures 1-3.

Selenium Blood Levels

Blood samples taken from 14 selenium participants at baseline and 3 months show increase in blood selenium levels for all subjects. Average selenium level at baseline was 130 mcg/l and at 3 months was 305.5 mcg/l. The selenium levels for those who did not proceed with the study was 131.7 mcg/l.

Adverse Events

A total of eight adverse event reports were filed, none of which were determined to be study related. Two adverse event reported for study subject number 146 were thought to be an outcome of either anesthesia or dehydration from fasting for the bronchoscopy. A summary of the events is shown below.

Patient ID	Date of Event	Event	Study Related	Outcome
003	5/01/98	Asthma	No	Resolved
010	8/18/98	Cough, chest tightness, fever	No	Resolved
010	8/25/98	Follow-up	No	Resolved
074	12/17/98	Vaso-vagal response, post bronchoscopy	Possibly	Resolved
014	1/10/99	Hernia	No	Herniorrhaphy
014	2/01/99	Fever	No	Resolved
146	12/3/99 to 12/5/99	Migraine headache	Possibly	Resolved
146	8/6/99 to 8/9/99	Migraine headache	Possibly	Resolved

No selenium dependent toxicity was reported for any dose level.

Laboratory Progress Report

For the 14 individuals who have completed the study:

- 140 biopsies have been formalin fixed and paraffin embedded, with most already sectioned in preparation for use.
- 72 biopsy samples have been micro-dissected for collection of atypical and normal cells from the same site.
- 28 blood samples, with GPX assays done in triplicate including control assays for no substrate, no sample and a positive control with purified GPX.
- Methylation specific PCR (MSP) of the p16 gene has been done on both the baseline and post-selenium sputum samples. No aberrant methylation patterns have been detected.
- MSP has been done on DNA extracted from bronchial cells collected at the biopsy site but failed to attach to the culture dishes. To date, 192 samples have been tested for MSP of the p16 gene. Using control primers, 158 of the samples could be analyzed (82.3%) but only one sample showed a positive result for MSP of the p16 gene (0.52%). Other MSP assays that are currently being evaluated include the promoter regions for: retinoic acid receptor beta (RAR-β), O^6-methylguanine DNA methyltransferase (MGMT) and adenomatous polyoposis coli (APC).

- All bronchial biopsy specimens for both the baseline and 3 month samples were immunostained for altered p16 expression. No obvious change in the staining pattern was seen between the two samples at the same biopsy site for the same individual.
- Assays for the detection of K-ras mutation in codon 12 proved unreliable and were discontinued.
- Assay has been developed for the detection of the overexpression of p53 protein using standard immunohistochemistry on sputum samples. Sputum samples for the fourteen individuals who have completed the study are currently being tested. The samples have been stained and await interpretation by a cytopathologist.
- Apoptosis assay for the bronchial biopsy has been developed based on a standard TUNEL assay. Bronchial biopsy samples are currently being tested.
- Proliferation assay based on immunostaining for Ki-67 were tested and discarded because of unreliable positive control. Proliferation assay based on immunohistochemical staining for the Proliferation Cell Nuclear Antigen (PCNA) was substituted. These assays are currently underway using bronchial biopsy samples.

For all study subjects

- Tissue culture of normal bronchial epithelial cells on 53 study subjects
- 283 NHBE cultures have been attempted with 139 growing well enough for the collection of cells for the preparation of DNA or stored for regrowth.
- DNA has been prepared from either the cells grown in culture or from cells that failed to attach to the culture dish.
- 53 blood samples processed for isolation of lymphocytes and for the baseline measurement of GPX plus an additional 14 samples from individuals who completed selenium supplementation.
- All samples, whole blood and lymphocytes, are stored at -80°C. All NHBE cultures are stored in liquid nitrogen.
- All biopsy blocks are stored and controlled by the Pathology Department of the H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center. In general, for most study subjects the number of biopsies is the same as the number of sites used for collecting NHBE for cell culture. For a few study subjects, extra biopsies were taken at the discretion of the physician.
- Comparison interpretation by a blinded consultant (Dr. Gazdar) has been completed and those interpretations have been compared with those by our study pathologist (Dr. Khoor). No significant difference in interpretation was found (Figure 4).

KEY RESEARCH ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Established feasibility of recruiting and enrolling heavy current and former smokers on a chemoprevention study
- Developed algorithm to recruit and screen subjects, obtain induced sputum specimens, obtain history and physical and screening chest x-ray and blood work prior to bronchoscopy, obtain bronchoscopy and start eligible subjects on selenium supplement.
- Developed close collaborative relationships with pulmonary medicine and pathology
- Evaluated induced sputa from high risk individuals for p16 hypermethylation (all with no hypermethylation detected)

- Developed archive of 274 bronchial epithelial cell cultures
- Developed archive of induced sputum specimens from 151 high risk individuals
- Evaluated the value of fluorescent bronchoscopy in addition to white light bronchoscopy in predicting dysplasia in a high risk population (Figure 5).
- Measured glutathione peroxidase pre- and post-selenium supplementation and found no change
- Recent literature report had shown that the levels of a selenoprotein, thioredoxin reductase, increased when exposed to sodium selenite (1). An antibody directed at thioredoxin reductase was used in both western blot and immunohistochemical staining. In the western blot, BEAS-2B cells were treated with either selenomethionine or selenite, but only selenite showed a partial response for a band of the correct size. Unfortunately, the western blot also showed many other bands which would confound any immunohistochemical staining. We did stain slides from two biopsies taken before and after selenium supplementation from four individuals. We saw no obvious difference. We will attempt to find another antibody for thioredoxin reductase that might be useful.
- Measured selenium pre- and post-selenium supplementation and found increase (dose still blinded)

REPORTABLE OUTCOMES

- Development of repository of induced sputum specimens from 151 individuals
- Development of repository of bronchial epithelial cell cultures (274 cultures from 53 study subjects).
- Serum and lymphocyte repository from the same patient population.
- Fluorescent light bronchoscopy better predicts atypia than white light bronchoscopy (Figure 5).
- No detectable p16 hypermethylation was found in DNA samples from sputum collected at baseline for the 14 individuals who received selenium supplementation nor could we detect changes in the protein levels in biopsy specimens by immunostaining for p16.
- NHBE cells cultured in the laboratory were tested for the presence of hypermethylation of the p16 promoter region. From a total of 192 cultures tested for hypermethylation of the p16 promoter, we found that 158 cultures could be amplified (82.3%) with only one culture positive (0.52%).

CONCLUSIONS

The dose levels of selenium used in the initial phase of the protocol appears to have no obvious toxicity but we need to finish the recruitment before we can unblind the study. We assume at least two individuals have received the highest dose of selenium (1000 μg).

Blood selenium levels increase after supplementation with selenomethionine. Baseline levels range from 92-200 μg/l and the levels after supplementation range from 190-460 μg/l. Once we unblind the study, we will be able to determine which doses are above the saturation level but we will still need to determine which dose is effective at modulation of atypia or biomarker.

Based on our current analysis, fluorescent bronchoscopy is better able to detect atypia than white light bronchoscopy. This analysis confirms the anecdotal comments we were receiving from the bronchoscopy physicians and personnel.

Analysis of the hypermethylation of the p16 promoter region has, so far, not shown any significant alteration of the region to suggest repression of transcription. We failed to detect a methylation specific PCR product in either sputum samples or in cells collected from the biopsy site. The samples we used to prepare DNA may have contained insufficient atypical cells for detection of an altered gene. We have completed immunostaining biopsy specimens for the expression of p16 protein and have not seen a difference in the expression between the baseline and 3 month biopsy samples from the same individual.

Glutathione peroxidase activity is not an adequate marker for measuring different levels of selenium. None of the samples collected after selenium supplementation showed a significant change in activity which would result from increased selenium in the blood. Even though we do not know the dose level for the different study subjects, we do know the blood levels. Apparently, the normal baseline levels of selenium are sufficient for optimal enzyme activity and this assay will not be used after completion of the dose finding phase.

The lack of any reportable selenium toxicity suggests that the optimal dose level for a selenium chemoprevention trial is not able to be set at the range of doses studied. The external scientific advisor committee, after hearing a presentation on this study in November, 1999, recommended finishing the current trial for the planned study period (Phase I), but not initiating another trial (the Phase II portion) using selenomethionine unless a better rationale and a more focused approach was developed. The current activities focus on completing Phase I and address the laboratory studies originally proposed.

REFERENCES

1. Berggren, M., Gallegos, A., Gasdaska, J. and Powis, G. 1997. Cellular thioredoxin reductase activity is regulated by selenium. Anticancer Research 17:3377-3380.

APPENDICES

Figure legend and Figures 1-6.

APPENDIX

Figure Legends

Figure 1: Histopathology diagnosis correlated with smoking status. Multiple biopsies were taken for each individual. The frequency of the most severe bronchial histopathology is correlated with the smoking status obtained from the enrollment questionnaire.

Figure 2: Histopathology diagnosis correlated with the observed white light bronchoscopy. Multiple biopsies were taken for each individual and each biopsy has both the histopathology diagnosis as well as the interpretation by white light (White light classification is: Class I is normal; Class II is characterized by inflammation and/or metaplasia to mild atypia; Class III is characterized by moderate to severe atypia).

Figure 3: Histopathology diagnosis correlated with the observed fluorescent light bronchoscopy. Multiple biopsies were taken for each individual and each biopsy has both the histopathology diagnosis as well as the interpretation by white light (Fluorescent light classification is: Class I is normal; Class II is characterized by inflammation and/or metaplasia to mild atypia; Class III is characterized by moderate to severe atypia).

Figure 4: A consulting pathologist was recruited to validated the diagnosis of our study pathologist. The results show the percent of dysplasia diagnosed in both the biopsies (Path Findings) and in the overall diagnosis (Path Diagnosis).

Figure 5: A comparison of the atypia described during both the white light and fluorescent LIFE bronchoscopy shows that LIFE calls more severe atypia than white light. This is supported by LIFE showing a stronger correlation to the histopathological diagnosis than white light.

Figure 6: Hemoglobin measurements at baseline and after 3 months of selenomethionine supplementation. Total hemoglobin was measured from lysed red blood cells using a kit purchased from Sigma Diagnostics (Cat. No. 525-A). The procedure is based on the oxidation of hemoglobin to methemoglobin and the subsequent conversion of methemoglobin to cyanmethemoglobin by potassium cyanide which has a maximum adsorption at 540 nm. The color intensity measured at 540 nm is proportional to the total hemoglobin concentration. Note that hemoglobin values measured in this way are higher than those obtained with other clinical chemistries.

Figure 7: Glutathione peroxidase activity per gram hemoglobin in blood samples taken at baseline and after 3 months of selenomethionine supplementation. Glutathione peroxidase (GPX) activity assay was done in triplicate for each blood sample collected at baseline and after 3 months of selonomethionine supplementation. A separate assay with purified GPX was done as a positive control and assays without sample or the organic peroxide substrate were done as negative controls. The assay is an indirect measure of GPX activity where oxidized glutathione is produced upon reduction of organic peroxide (*tert*-butyl hydroperoxide) and is recycled to its reduced state by exogenously added glutathione reductase (GR). The reduction of oxidized glutathione by GR requires the oxidation of NADPH. The GPX activity is determined by a decrease in adsorption at 340 nm as NADPH is oxidized to NADP. Using the molar extinction coefficent for NADPH (6220 $M^{-1}cm^{-1}$) and the rate of decrease in absorbance at 340 nm, the GPX activity for each sample can be calculated.

Figure 1 **Histopathology Frequency in Current and Former Smokers**

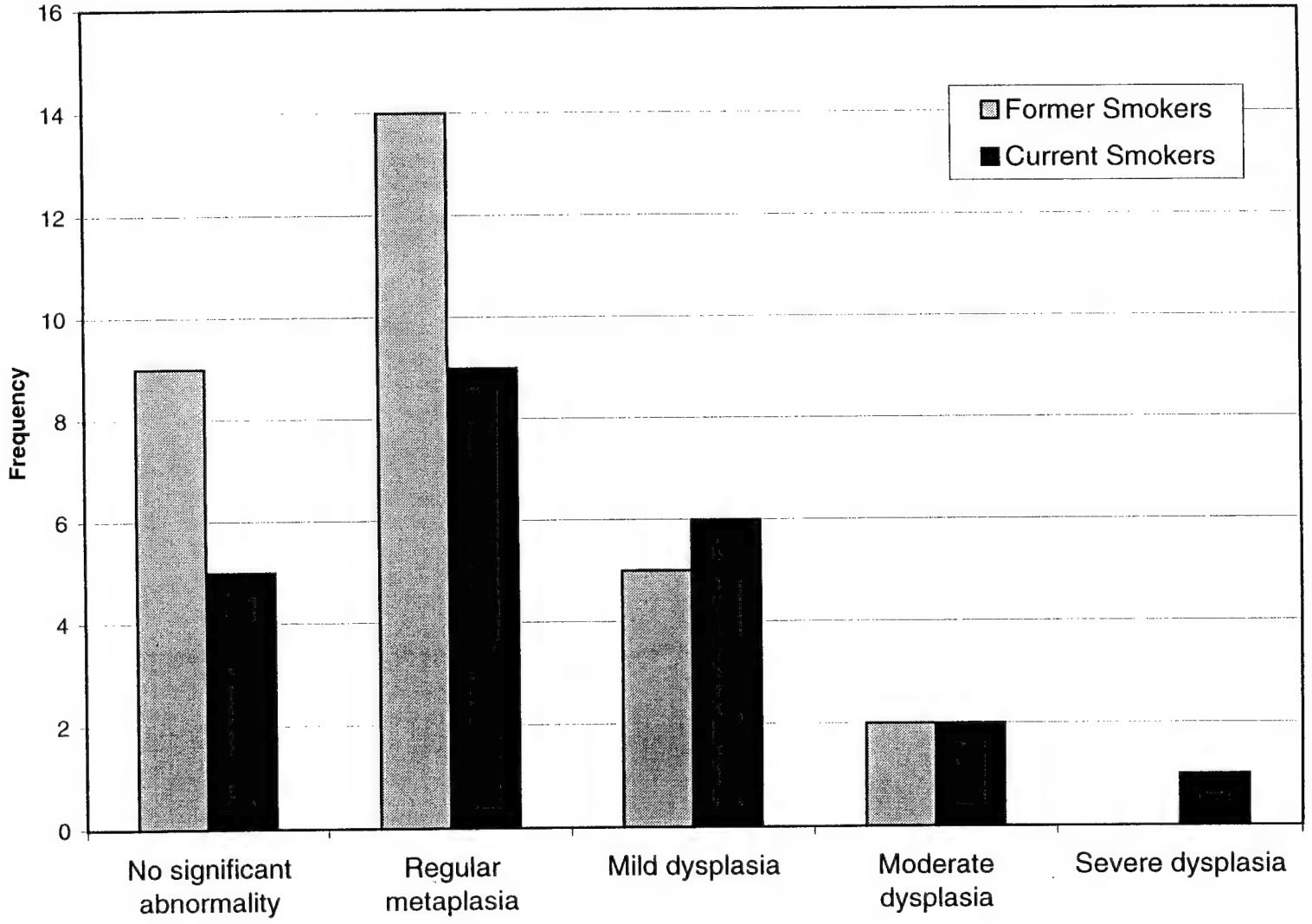


FIGURE 2

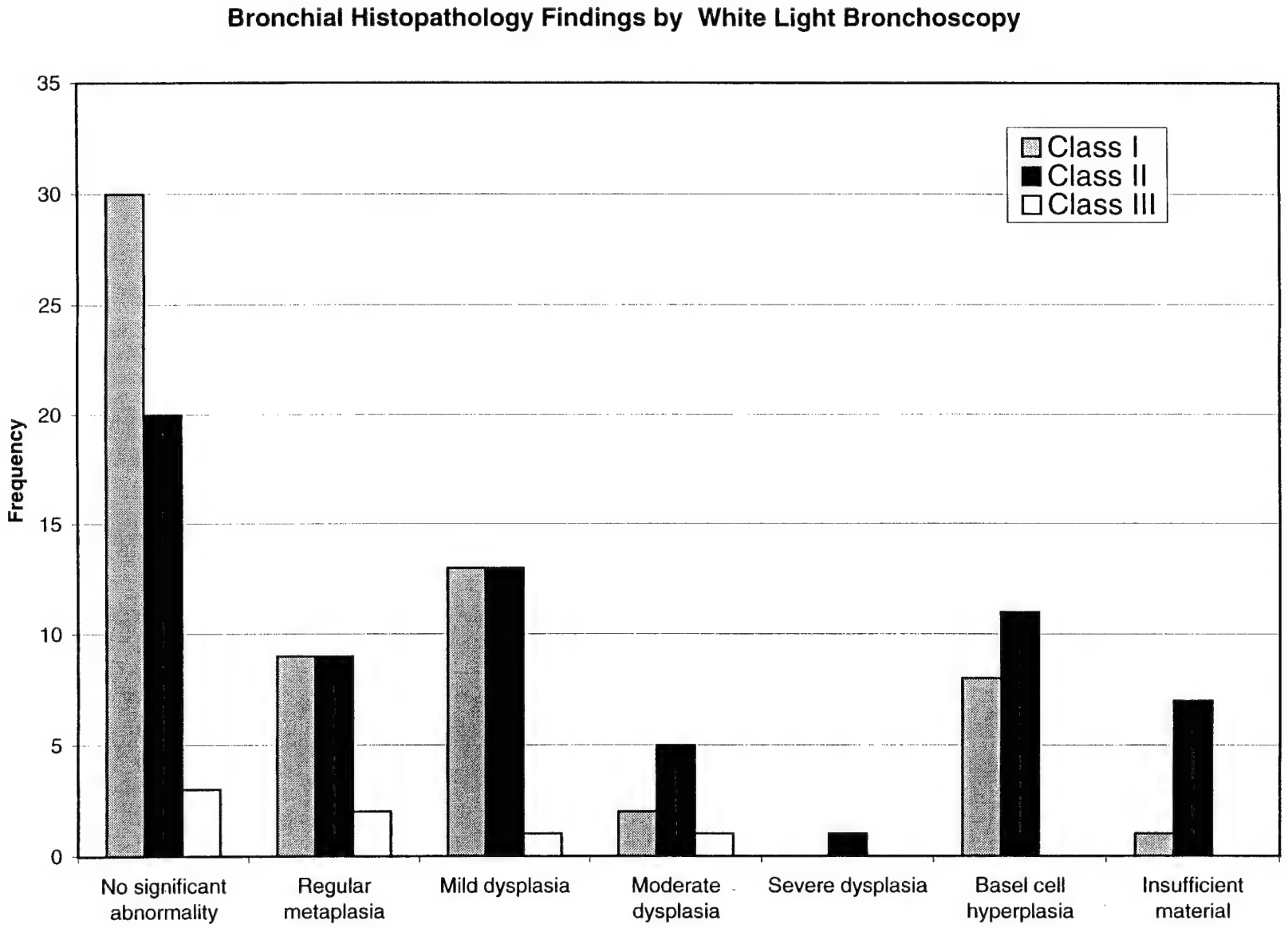

Bronchial Histopathology Findings by White Light Bronchoscopy
Frequency
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Class I
Class II
Class III
No significant abnormality
Regular metaplasia
Mild dysplasia
Moderate dysplasia
Severe dysplasia
Basel cell hyperplasia
Insufficient material

FIGURE 3

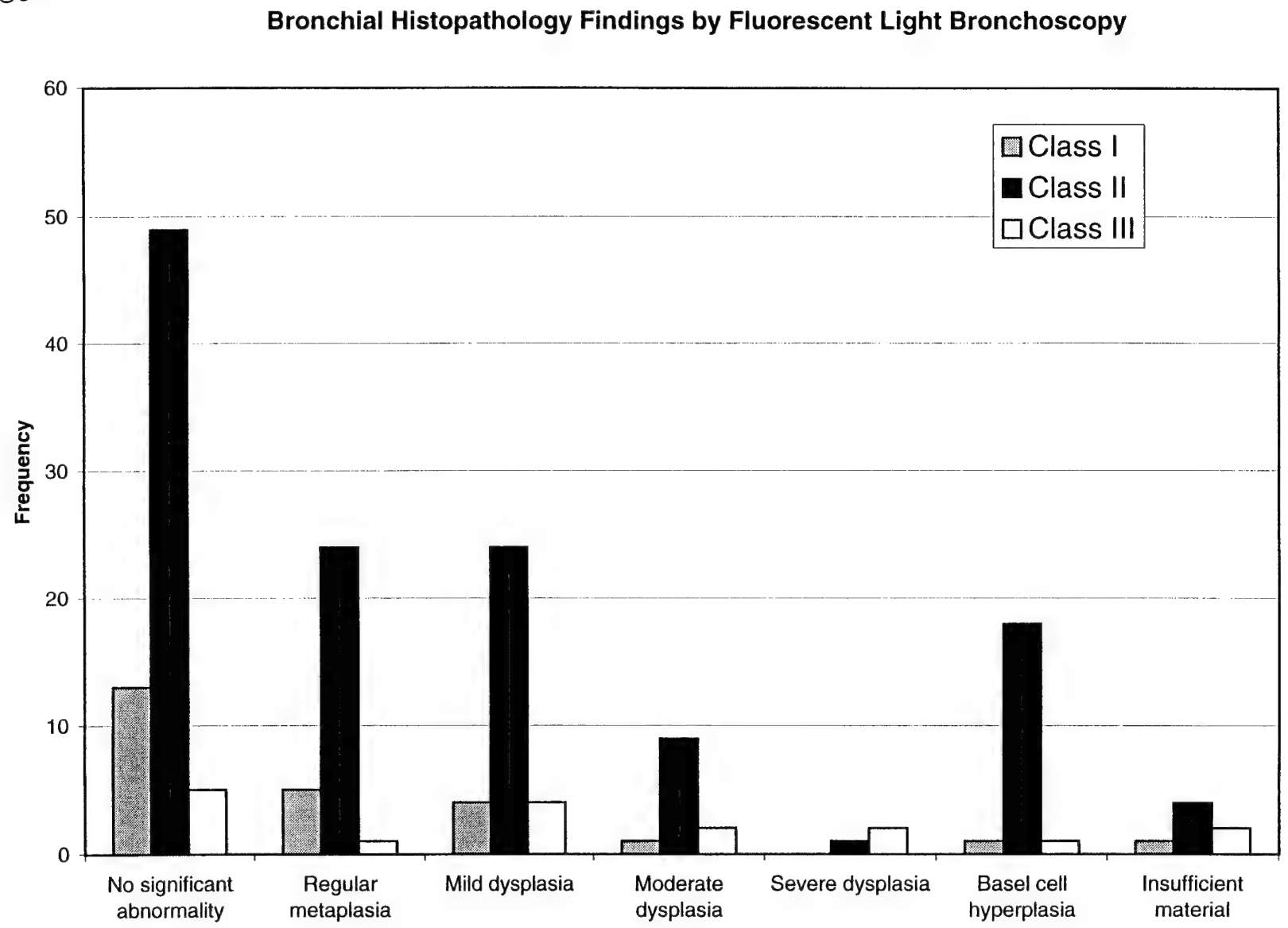

Bronchial Histopathology Findings by Fluorescent Light Bronchoscopy
Frequency
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Class I
Class II
Class III
No significant abnormality
Regular metaplasia
Mild dysplasia
Moderate dysplasia
Severe dysplasia
Basel cell hyperplasia
Insufficient material

Figure 4

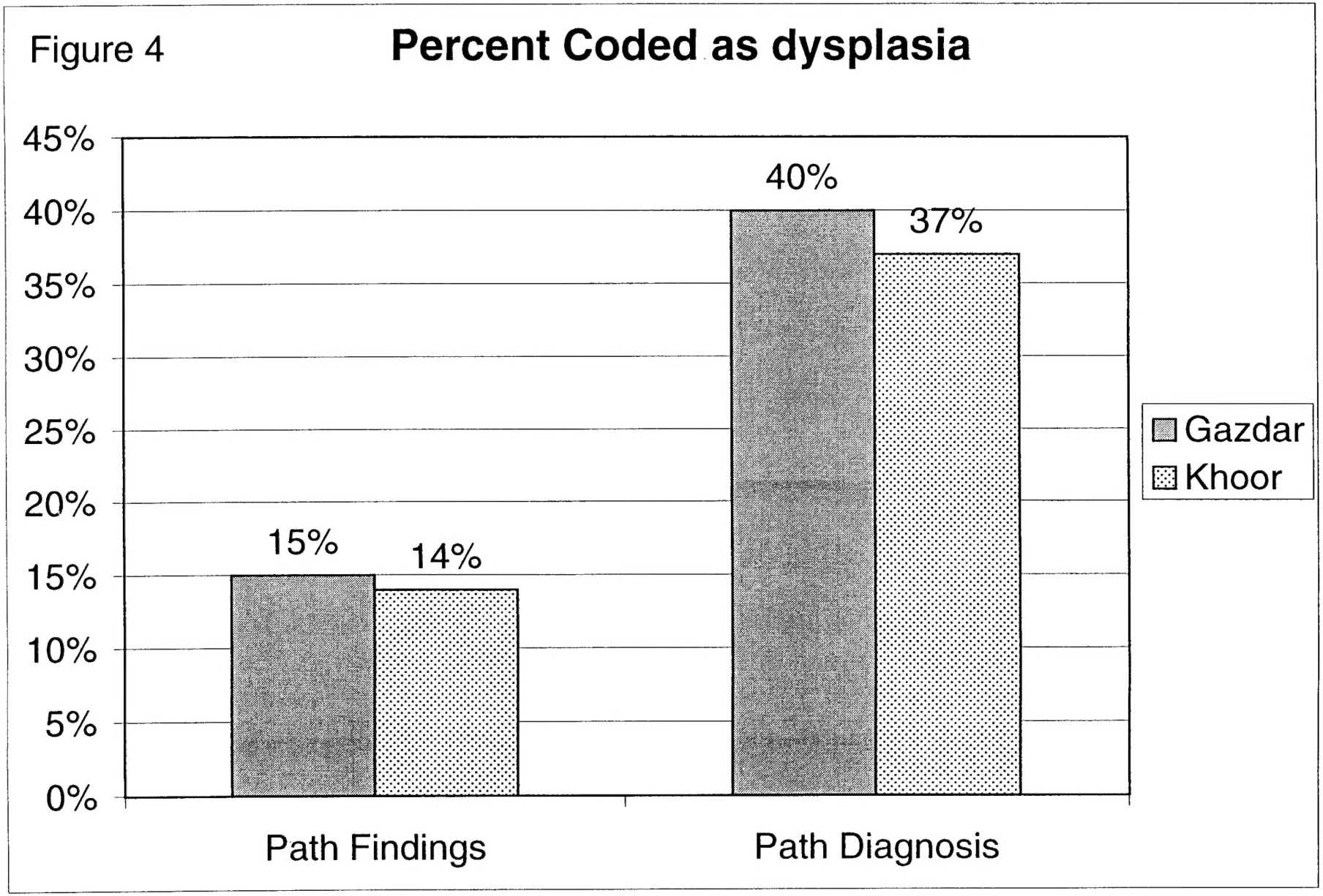

Percent Coded as dysplasia
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
15%
14%
40%
37%
Path Findings
Path Diagnosis
Gazdar
Khoor

Figure 5

Agreement Between Observations with White Light and LIFE Bronchoscopy

		LIFE CLASS		
		I	II	III
WHITE LIGHT CLASS	I	156	81	5
	II	13	15	2
	III	2	0	2

Observations by LIFE bronchoscopy of 276 endobronchial sites correlated with those by white light bronchoscopy (Spearman correlation coefficient R=0.16, p=0.0087). Agreement was not strong with Kappa statistic=0.108 (95% confidence limits 0.014, 0.20).

Histopathological diagnosis showed a better correlation with LIFE bronchoscopy (R=0.12, p=0.053) than with white light bronchoscopy (R=-0.075, p=0.233).

FIGURE 6

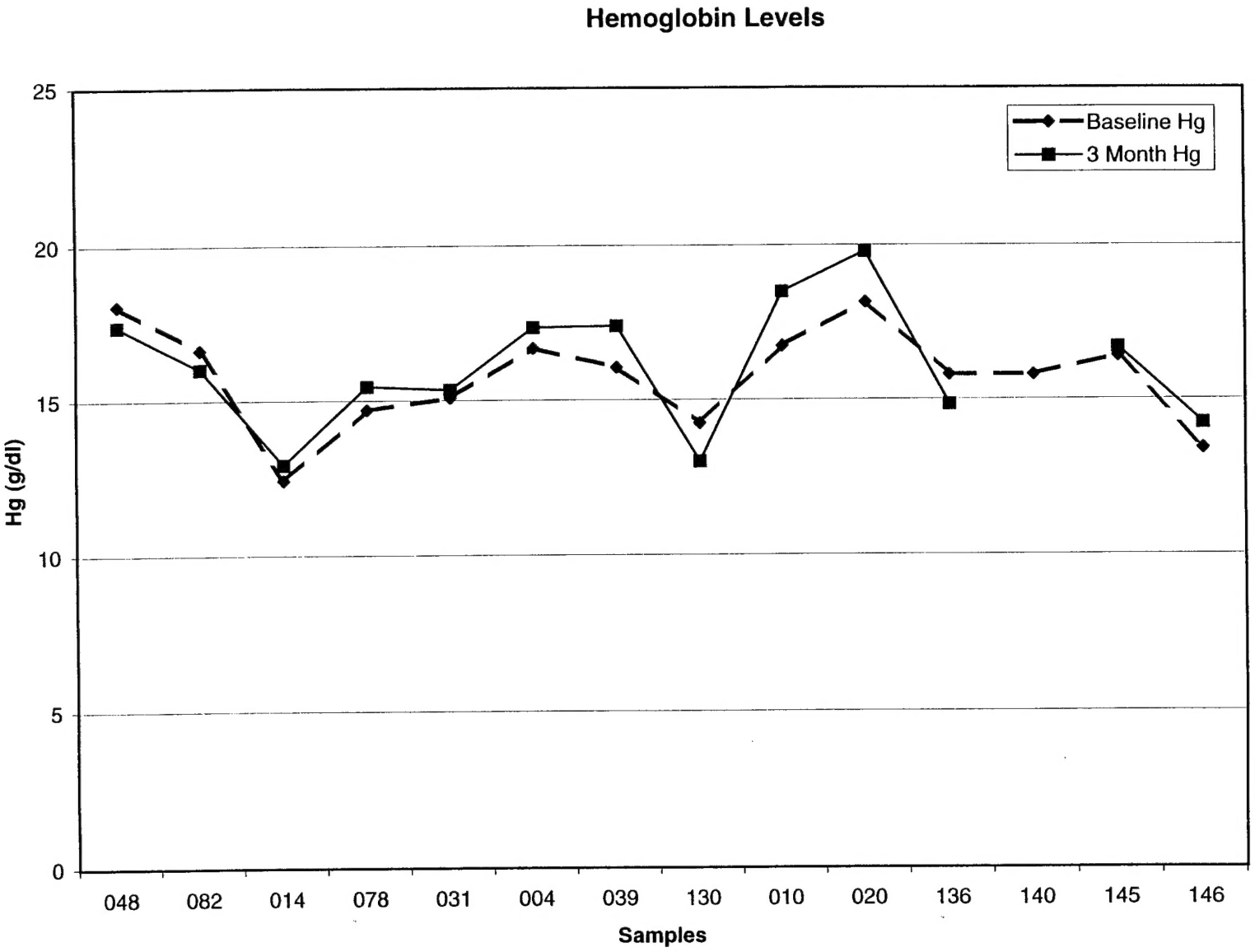
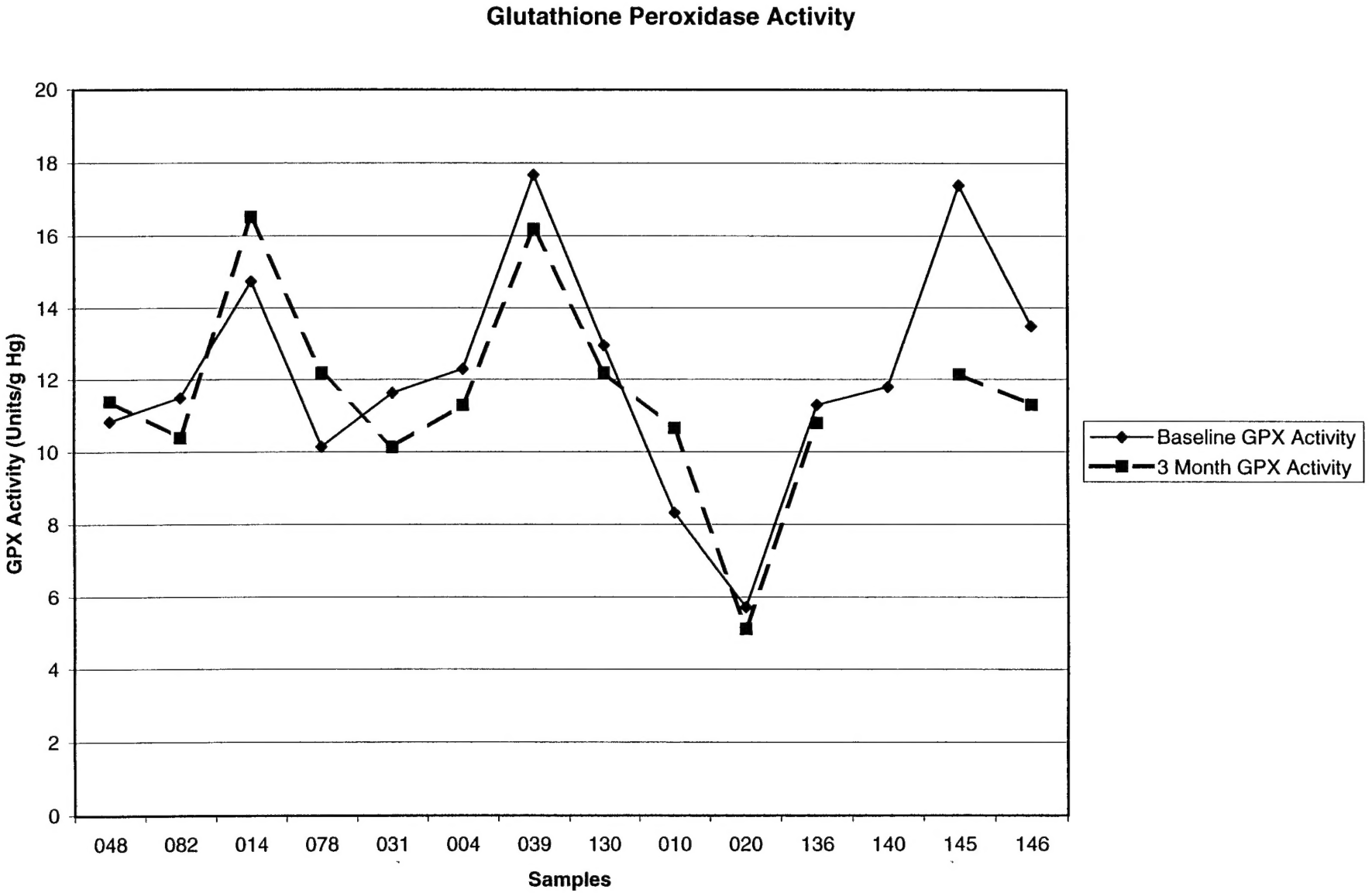

Hemoglobin Levels
Baseline Hg
3 Month Hg
Hg (g/dl)
25
20
15
10
5
0
048
082
014
078
031
004
039
130
010
020
136
140
145
146
Samples

FIGURE 7


Glutathione Peroxidase Activity
GPX Activity (Units/g Hg)
20
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
048
082
014
078
031
004
039
130
010
020
136
140
145
146
Samples
Baseline GPX Activity
3 Month GPX Activity